

To MSI,

Many thanks for the opportunity to prepare this course. It has been an epic, sometimes brain-frying but very rewarding journey and I sincerely hope it will be both used and useful. There is certainly a need for a course like this in the MENA region and I trust the course finds its way to meet that need.

The following are some notes and comments about the course...

Course preparation. The course is based on a 'policy office capability framework' (you will find it in the 'admin' folder). The framework sets out the capabilities of entry, mid and senior policy officers. The course is designed to develop the skills of the entry and mid-level policy officers, although obviously the senior levels would also benefit from it. The policy office capability framework can also be used to develop job descriptions in policy offices.

I have also designed the course to fit roughly into the IPC model but in more simplistic terms. The 3 key themes I have focused on in the course are: evidenced-based policy; maximizing stakeholder inclusion; and coordination and coherence. These elements are sorely absent in Iraq and I strongly believe that they promote the process of peace-building through responsive, 'good' governance. Trainees who I have taught on these matters in the past have always been most enthusiastic to learn policy from this angle.

Course delivery. I have designed the course as a practical training course with a lot of 'how to-ing'. But it can also be delivered as a series of seminars or as a 1-academic year university course. You can find these 3 different ways to present it in the 'course program' folder in the 'admin' section. The main differences between the 3 ways to present the course are-

- The training course is used to its fullest extent with the policy practicum and although it can be delivered in 25 or so weeks, I recommend it is delivered over a year in order to give the participants time to complete the practicum properly;
- The university course is the same as the training course but organized to fit neatly into how I have been told an Iraqi academic year works;
- The seminar series omits the practicum and the exercises and because it is less interactive, it can be delivered faster. As the depth of learning is unlikely to be the same as the other ways the course is presented, participants should not be awarded with anything more than a participation certificate.

Course contents. The course should (inshallah) be sufficient to give participants a basic practical grounding in public policy. However, as nothing is ever enough, there is always room for improvement and expansion. If you are interested in doing this, I suggest the course could be improved with the addition of more workshops that deal with the following-

1. In the **introductory section**, a workshop on how to build and work in teams, including practical exercises.
2. In the **working with stakeholders-**
 - a workshop on how to design and implement a communication strategy; and
 - a workshop on practical presentation skills focusing on how to present to stakeholders and to policy decision-makers.
3. In the **Implementation, monitoring, evaluation etc**, a workshop on how to conduct and learn lessons from pilot projects;

4. In the **policy analysis section**-
 - a workshop on how to prepare an impact statement on a proposed policy; and
 - a workshop on how to prepare policies for intractable policy problems.
5. **A new section for Coordination and coherence**, perhaps 2 or 3 workshops guiding central ministries and the Cabinet/PM's office to establish systems and procedures for policy and legislation to ensure joined up policy and inter-ministerial coordination. I have started this process with guides on some of the policy documents.
6. **A new section for policy office set-up**-
 - A workshop on how to undertake strategic planning for the ministry's policy program;
 - a workshop that helps the participants to identify their Ministry's policy office resourcing and personnel needs to develop a specific policy; and
 - a workshop giving participants practice redesigning the policy steps set out in the course to adapt to different types of policies – smaller policies, intractable policy problems etc.
7. I also wanted the course to apply a handful of **policy statements from other countries** (see workshop 1.6 - A first look at public policies). This is because I feel that if the participants have the opportunity to see what other countries have done and to develop critical capacities to assess them, they would significantly gain more knowledge and confidence when they do it themselves. I had a very positive result from this approach when I worked with the Iraqi ministries on a national child protection policy. However, because of time constraints, we cannot translate these policy statements and I have not incorporated them into the program as much as I would wish. For example, I wanted to use them as examples in the workshops for the participants to -
 - compare and critique how the different countries identify stakeholders, whether they excluded important groups etc;
 - assess how well they describe the policy problem and the need for the policy; and
 - assess how they have organized coordination and coherence through their management and implementation structures.

If you wish to include these policies as I intended, I have left the possibility for this to be done within the program by leaving them in 1.6. It would not take too much more work to provide background information for the trainer to guide the participants through a critique of these policy statements.

A participants' guide? There is no participant guide. The details and explanations are contained in the trainers' notes and the text marked in red are the instructions to the trainer to do something, such as to engage the workshop in conversation or to do a practical exercise. If, however, you deleted the red writing from the trainers' notes, you would have the basis for a participant guide.

References. I have referenced the work of other authors that I have used but I have not sought their approval incorporate their work into the course. There are numerous reports and guides included, for example, in the 'additional material for the trainer' in almost every workshop.

Trainers. I have tried to prepare the trainers notes with a lot of detail in the likely case the trainers do not have much experience of public policy. To find some knowledgeable Arabic speaking trainers, I suggest you look towards Jordan as, from my observation, they appear to have more practical experience there than most other countries in the region. I have attached a lot of additional material for the trainers in case they wish to learn more about the workshop topics. These additional materials are all in English and I assume that the trainer can speak and read English.

Finally, all the mistakes are mine, including lapses into dodgy Aussie spelling and idioms. Writing up to 5,000 words a week plus preparing the exercises, slides and handouts has not been an easy job and I fear that speed has kept me from writing perfectly. I am also not a trainer and this is likely to show through. The course has not been 'test driven' with any real-life trainees, so you are highly likely to find the need to adjust the timing, explanations and overall presentation when it is put to use. At one point, I recruited a friend who is a trainer and she helped me to knock some of the workshops into better shape but the re-translation process proved to be too cumbersome for us to do it for all of them. On a positive note, however, the Arabic translations prepared by my colleague Jasim Jabir are wonderful and attract much of enthusiastic praise.

If you need any more information or clarification on this work, you are always welcome to contact me by email at jane fuller@mac.com, or by skype on j_a_n_e_f.

Best wishes,

Jane